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From Within
One Heart.

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From Within One Heart.

"Do I find my work interesting? Do I have experience? Will I tell you one?"

I often wonder if you who know nothing personally of mission work in Utah ever dream, as you sit buried in the leaves of some fashionable novel, that we who are on the field read stories far more thrilling, since they are written on hearts —not paper; hear tales from lips that quiver with the telling. You girls who love to become "deeply interested," "lost to the world" in popular fiction, did you look for it, could find in real life tragedies that would thrill and fascinate as can never printed page of the most gifted author. I try to forget them. It hurts so to bear in your own heart these deep wounds of others; but some I cannot forget. One in particular comes to me now, which I think you will consider an "experience."

You know we do things in a very primitive way out there in our mission work. I was the only teacher at our station and had to serve as janitor as well, in the little log house in which we held our school. As I closed the door on my labors

one evening after what had seemed to me a particularly trying and unprofitable day, one of my little scholars slipped her hand into mine, begging me to come with her—her mother was very sick and had asked for me. I went gladly—it seemed so good to be wanted. We make the most of these openings, for it is often as hard to get into houses in Utah as it is in China. Mollie, a winsome little maiden of perhaps eight summers, trudged along beside me, her brown eyes overflowing with tears as she told me how sick poor mother was, how long she had been in bed, how thin her poor hands were, and all the items of illness which had evidently been closely observed by this small woman.

When we reached the little, dingy home in the outskirts of M—— I was met at the door by an old woman, bent with years and very feeble, who pointed me on to a room in the rear with a sad shake of her head. "What is the matter?" I asked. "She is dyin'—yes, dyin'." "Has she been ill long?" "I don't call it ill, ma'am, not rightly ill; she's jest a dyin' of a broken heart and plural marriage," and with another sad shake of the head the poor woman hobbled away, while I stepped into the other room. There, on a wretched bed, lay a poor, sick creature whose black eyes gazed out at me from her pallid face with the piteous look of some wounded animal. Wistful, sad, heart broken, their owner lay dying indeed, as the old woman had said, of a broken heart and plural marriage. Let me tell you the story I learned from the poor lips, only a few words at a time, gasped out as she found breath. I can make it

plainer to you than it was to me then, for later I learned much from the old woman.

"And so you have come, ma'am; Mollie said you would. You would have been glad to come before? Yes, ma'am, Mollie said that, too, but—but—I couldn't see you then. I didn't want you, ma'am, until I knew the end had come—the end of everything for me. Not yet, you hope? Oh, yes, ma'am. Not long now to the end. But don't think I'm grievin', ma'am—only jest for the little Mollie—I'd be glad to go but for the little one—and perhaps if you'll listen to me, ma'am, it'll be best for her, too. Let me tell you what has been in my heart and kept there all these years—for I couldn't tell it before. Perhaps I may tell you; it takes me so long, but, oh! be patient; let me tell at last my story, and ease my heart.

"Don't think, ma'am, I was always like this. Years ago, ages ago, it seems, I was a red-cheeked English lassie, as pure in thought as you are yourself, ma'am; and, indeed, I tried to be good. Mother always said I was her comfort. Thank God that He took her before she saw me come to this; that, at least, I can be thankful for—little else. Oh, ma'am, you ought to thank God every day of your life that your religion can never make the shameful thing of you that I am. That is my load. I am dyin', ma'am. Only a few days more and I shall be out of a world where for years I have crept along, hidin' my face lest some who looked might see my shame. For you know, ma'am, it could never seem like marriage to me. It will soon be over now. What a beautiful place

Heaven must be—you know, ma'am, they don't marry there.

"Did I tell you that I was once young, and pure and fresh as yourself? Just mother and I in dear old England. We were so poor! Father was gone. And then, one day, a man came from far away and told us of America—how easy it was to live there—homes for everybody, plenty to eat and wear, people so kind that they had sent him after all the poor and discouraged—they had homes just waitin' for them; they wanted women especially, as they did not have many to do the work in the new country. It seemed so good! Mother and I had naught to keep us; others besides us were going, men and women, too, my own aunt and her husband; so we came away. I can see it all now; the neighbors coming to help us off with little gifts and hearty good-byes. The dear old home—poor ma'am, but *honest*, not stained; the old mooley cow in the sweet meadow grass, browsing along home that last night, her tinkling bell seeming, in the dewy twilight, to say to me 'good-bye! good-bye!' and it was good-bye, had I only known it; good-bye to all that made life dear—youth, happiness, honor.

"Mother died on the way over—it was so hard then—such an awful grief that I knew nothing worse could ever be. Yet in six months I rejoiced that she had left me.

"How big and rich your country looked to me, little lass that I was, barely 16, ma'am. First we reached New York, then traveled by train for days and days and days. How glad I was when

at last they said we were nearly home. Did they call it home? They ought to have said 'hell.'

"Aunt and I were soon busy settling down in the new place, which was a little farm out from Salt Lake City. Uncle went often to the city, while aunt and I kept pretty close at home. Sometimes an elder came to teach us our new faith—not a hard one to believe, ma'am, for you see we thought if their religion had taught them to send way off for us, and bring us to that beautiful country and give us such a start in life, it must be from God.

"The first cloud was when uncle began to change so—stayed away so much. But he said the new faith made him give much of his time to other things; so we managed along without him. But then he grew so surly; he had aways been kind, and poor aunt hardly knew how to bear it. Poor soul! there was more to come. Uncle stayed away more and more. When he came he often brought an elder with him, who talked long with him after we had gone to bed—an ugly old man I thought him, Elder Graves.

"When the winter was well over and a beautiful spring had come, uncle took me to town one day to a large house where were six elders, among them Elder Graves. I was almost afraid; they seemed so solemn, and I did not know why they wanted me until Elder Graves said that they had had a revelation, that I must be sealed to him—married to him. 'But,' I said, I don't want to marry you! I don't like you! You are too old and I am so young. I'd rather stay with aunt.'

"Uncle sided with the elders, gruffly telling me to stop my nonsense and listen to the revelation of the authorities, or it would be worse for me. When aunt joined her voice and said she was afraid for me longer to say no, I gave up. Why, ma'am, I was only a child. I remember well that aunt and I had to let down my dresses that very spring, but in a week from that time I was taken to the Endowment House and married to Elder Graves.

"Well, young hearts soon rebound. I was a child, he was kind. He bought me pretty clothes, saying such a color and figure deserved setting off. In a few weeks we started for our home in the country.

"You have been in Salt Lake, ma'am. You know the little road that winds out by Fort Douglass. It was a pretty road that morning. I can hear now the water rippling through the streets of the city, and Elder Graves said just such a stream flowed through the meadow of my new home, where a mooley cow was waiting for me to milk her. I remember turning around to look back at the great dome in the distance as we rode away, and the temple which was building nearby; at the long lines of trees in the city; at the sweet fields around us along the little streams, while over all hung the guns of Fort Douglass beyond. It was beautiful to me. It had begun to seem very sweet to be going to my own home, a little cottage in the trees, he said. After a ride of many miles he pointed out to me the little houses which nestled at the foot of the blue distant mountains, and among them my home.

"'Do others live here? other families? Do you rent to them?' I asked.

"'Well, not exactly—hum. You've a heap to learn, Sallie, and I'm afraid you're one to take it hard—most of the new ones do. But you'll settle down to it after awhile They all do. Now, here we are; jump down.' Several women and children had swarmed about us as we stopped. 'Now this is wife Elizabeth, this is wife Caroline, this wife Mona.'

"'But whose wife, Elder?'

"'Why, mine, Sallie.'

"'What do you mean? Am I not your wife?'

"'Yes, but so are the rest of them. You see you hadn't happened to hear that plural marriage was part of the faith—delivered to our blessed prophet. We all have as many wives as we can take care of.'

"'But you can't have me, if you have others, it isn't decent. I won't stay—take me back at once. What do you mean?'

"Only mocking laughter greeted my cries, as he slowly unharnessed the horses. 'Well, now, Sallie, it's a long way back—too fur to walk; all the houses we have passed have plural wives just like you. There ain't no help and no way out. Have your little fling. You're prettier than ever when you're mad. You ain't well grounded in the faith yet.'

"Take me back to my uncle, you wicked man, I won't stay here.'

"'Your uncle, you fool, has sealed three wives since he came, and had a powerful revelation

about you, but I got ahead of him. Men learn the new religion quicker than women.'

"'Oh, ma'am! think of me—young, helpless, penniless, thousands of miles from home—none such as you to call on—knowing already that a little one would some day share my shame."

Here, overcome by grief and tears, the poor soul sank back exhausted. Only the sweet words of "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" could calm her distress, and when she slept I slipped away, promising to return and spend the night.

When I came again to the little home she was still asleep, but the old woman was glad to join my vigil, and from her I learned much. She was the aunt of whom the poor girl had told me—with troubles enough of her own to bear. She had found, not long after her niece had left her, that her husband had other younger wives, and had left him—fortunately having enough to buy a poor little home. Being old and feeble, she had not herself been troubled with revelations or Elders, but had lived out her hard life, cursing the plural marriage which had caused all her trouble.

At the time when our National Government passed the law prohibiting polygamy, many besides her niece were turned out of their homes in seeming obedience to the new law. Footsore, and even then ill of the malady, which was soon to conquer her, the niece had arrived at her humble door with a little child—had never seemed until lately to be just right in her head—had talked much of a cruel man who had abused her and laughed at her grief—had said that she had run

away, and he hated her so that he would not come after her, now that she was broken down and miserable. They had lived as best they could with the little work they could get to help them.

The invalid awakened after midnight and smiled sadly at me. "Oh! ma'am, here yet? I didn't tell you all, ma'am. I can't go till I do. Oh! ma'am, I did jest as he said I would. I settled down—but it was only that I had no strength to go on. The heart within me fought just as hard as ever. I was put to work by wife Caroline—she was deep in the faith, and thought that she and all of us were only fulfilling our destinies when we were sealed to Elder Graves. You can imagine that it was hard to live there where everyone quarreled so—bickerings all the time among the wives as well as the children. You know, ma'am, it couldn't be otherwise. While woman has woman's heart, to share her husband with others is to nurse jealousy and hatred. That never hurt me. I couldn't love the brute who had ruined me, body and soul, and who, because I was younger, and perhaps prettier than the old wives, seemed to delight in tormenting them through me—and I had to pay for it. They'll tell you that plural wives live in harmony and peace, but, ma'am, how could they? Well, by and by, I became outwardly like Caroline and Elizabeth and Mona. Maybe, when one is trained to the faith from childhood, it becomes easier. But it never grew easy for me—and when my first baby came, oh, the shame of it! the bitter shame! I was glad when it died—it was a girl, ma'am, and I was glad to

put it where it could never know what I knew—feel what I left. I think Elder Graves tried to be kind at first, but I hated him so that I finally wore out his patience. I faded so, too, all my pretty color gone. Blows and curses were added to my lot. You see, ma'am, it was almost more than woman's heart could bear, and I wore away so.

"And now, oh! ma'am, I come to the end of my story. I lie here thinking of my girl life in England, and I look at little Mollie. Oh, ma'am, will you save her for me? Don't let her know what I am! Dont' let her be what I have been! You hardly dare promise? You are not yourself able? Oh! ma'am, you can, you must. I can't die and leave her to such a life as mine. I couldn't rest in my grave if I knew she was what I had been. Oh! ma'am, now that you know, you must say yes. There are so many rich in your great country, some one will take her. Your song says 'the land of the free'—but she can't be free here—I wasn't free, I was the worst sort of a slave, there are none lower than I. Don't let Mollie be like me! Save her from plural marriage."

What could I say? Only my promise could quiet the poor soul, already showing signs of the end for which she longed. She lingered for several days. When I could I was with her, and her eyes followed me always—her lips whispered until the last, "Remember Mollie." She smiled sweetly when the verses and songs she loved lulled her to sleep, and always said, "Mollie, too, she will be there. You'll save her." Sometimes the thought of others would disturb her peace. "So many

little girls, but one is safe. You promised—tell others." After one very restless night, when the gray dawn was slipping down the mountains, she passed away, and it came about that her last words were: "Tell others." Perhaps He meant it to be thus. So when I have a chance, as now, to tell this heart story, I gladly do so, handing on to others the legacy which I had from those dying lips—

"Mollie is safe—but there are others."

B. M. Bush

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